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VOLUME 57 ISSUE 2

RUTGERS REVIEW



A black and white photograph of a forest. A large, gnarled tree trunk dominates the foreground, extending from the bottom left towards the top right. The tree's bark is rough and textured. In the background, other trees are visible, some with dense foliage and others bare, creating a misty or foggy atmosphere. The sky is overcast and grey.

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CULTURE

PHOTO OF F.A.C.E. MODELINGTEAM BY ANASTASIA CODJEBAS

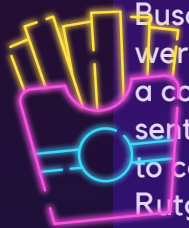


Rutgers' Finest Hours

by Sahana Iyer

I do an unnatural combination of speed walking and running up the stairs to the Math & Physics Library (located in Hill Center on Busch). My math exam is a mere few hours away from leading to my demise and I need to arm myself with last-minute reviewing. I reach the entrance only to find it barricaded by doors: Closed. The time: 5:03 pm. Frustration and disappointment course through my veins as I turn around with my head lowered, the frantic energy lost. Ok. So, I could have studied in my dorm or I could have gone to the sometimes loud, mostly full, Busch Student Center. But neither options were convenient to me and I doubt that I, a college student, am alone in this sentiment. Shouldn't college libraries exist to cater to students' conveniences? Most Rutgers libraries bolt the doors by either 5 pm or 8 pm with the exception of the Carr Library (located on Livingston) and the Alexander Library (located on College Ave)— who thankfully extend their invitation to midnight. However, it is not beneficial to residents of Busch and Cook/Douglass. I can attest that Rutgers students will appreciate more flexible opening and closing hours of libraries. It would be a different story if the restriction on library hours laid on valid reasoning.

I recall rousing half-lidded and disoriented at 8:25 am on a dreary Wednesday morning, 35 minutes prior to my first in-person lecture (among four that I attended that day). Hunger hit me with full force as I readied myself, but my options to assuage it were limited: trudge to Brower Commons to meal swipe a paltry grab-and-go breakfast, eat it, and reach the Rutgers Academic Building on time, or starve until 10:20 am. My dilemma would have been non-existent if Cafe West (located in the West Rutgers Academic Building) opened before 9 am. I could have walked to the academic building and gotten a bagel sans worry about arriving late to the lecture— what a dream. Furthermore, dining halls and cafes should extend their closing hours beyond 8 pm. I personally have early dinners, but I know that many don't; for some, it is a preference and for others, work is an inhibiting factor. We should be able to use the dining halls at our leisure considering that many restaurants on campus don't accept meal swipes. The restaurants that do, such as Harvest and Henry's Diner, are closed for the Fall 2021 semester. Rutgers should consider compensating for the limited dine-in options with accommodating dining hall hours.





Finding My Way Back

By: Anastasia Codjebas

Somewhere along the way, throughout the 10 years since I moved to the US, I have convinced myself that because people here could rarely ever relate to my unique cultural customs, they were not as important. I subconsciously told myself that maybe they are not worth maintaining and celebrating if no one knows about them here. The detachment from my roots all stemmed from the lack of representation of these parts of me in this country, which I used to have while living in Russia and the Gagauzian part of Moldova.

Although I enjoy the festivities of Catholic Christmas, the one that my family celebrates as Russian Orthodox Christians, happens on January 7th, way after people finish celebrating their Christmas. More so, while tree decorations, presents, and Santa visits are associated with Catholic Christmas, they are what many Slavic people hold true for their New Year. New Year's is a time when families gather and cook for the celebration while keeping the magic in the air for the children.

Christmas for us, however, is about maintaining many symbolic gestures and connecting with people in your family and neighborhood,; while wishing many healthy years upon each other, while also giving out treats and change to the kids. Similarly, Easter always happens after everyone else is already done cracking their eggs. There are many other disparities that distance me even more, such as the celebration of the Old New Year on January 14th, following the old calendar.

Since there is so much resistance as is, I can't even speak of the smaller traditions that I grew up following, because they are even more far-fetched to outsiders. When I am tempted to share something about my traditions, I hesitate because I imagine that everyone will think, why is she sharing about a holiday that long passed? It is the feeling that the only way to justify posting is if I give it more context first, so I might as well not.

In more recent times, I have been trying to challenge these limiting beliefs, because learning about unfamiliar cultures always has to start somewhere. The first step to having representation is cultivating it yourself. I am starting to enjoy sharing personal journeys and stories because I let people in to see what I hold close to my heart, and I know that no one will ever experience life exactly like I do. Every year I try to make every celebration more meaningful, because I feel that holidays are extremely valuable days to check in with yourself and to remind yourself of all that you are grateful for and would not be the same without.

The often-used advice to stop worrying about things you can't control and act on things that you can holds true here too. Instead of worrying about people not being familiar with my culture, I can start telling my stories the way I want them to be heard. Storytelling is rewarding in its own ways, because being able to move people through my individual experiences reaffirms that my stories are worth sharing and my culture worth living on.





FRENCH MAID

By Jessica Buten

In contemporary media the French maid can be found with a duster in hand, wearing a black ultra mini skirt, paired with a frilly white apron. Her over-exaggerated French accent alongside the sexualized costume that is seen to influence modern lingerie designs is distant from the 19th century modest uniforms historically accurate French maids would wear during their laboring hours. An outfit that was once worn for purposes of practicality, is now remodeled as a costume worn for an aesthetic choice.

A favorite French maid character in modern media is Yvette in the 1985 movie *Clue*. While I admire the costume design of Yvette's character, she and other French maid characters in modern media are questionably and consistently portrayed in a subservient manner that is in line with the general societal view of their jobs as maids.

The contemporary portrayal of the French maid's character with traits that are in line with the general view of the public's concept of maids is also a reflection of expected societal gender norms. This can at times, especially in a movie like *Clue* from the 80s, feel outdated and problematic. The nature of obedience tied to the public's perspective of a maid's inherently feminine work is a factor that has led to the modern day sexualization of the French maid through their expressed subservience.

Prior to the modern pop culture depiction of the French maid, their history started in the 1800s when it became fashionable for affluent British families to hire a maid from France. These maids from France were known to fulfill the roles of a Lady's Maid. In this role, their duties were to provide assistance to the women of the family by taking care of their hair, makeup, and wardrobe.

The French heritage of the maids served as a reputable source of knowledge on fashion and artistic culture that was deemed useful to the wealthy British women that hired them. Through their roles as the Lady's Maid, the status of maids from France became bound to traits of glamour and subservience. This was also a contributing factor leading to the onset of the modern media-based sexualization of the French maid character. In conjunction with the traits of subservience and glamour, during the 19th century rumors of affairs between French maids and their employers started to surface. The rumors of affairs altered the reputation of the French maid to become associated with risqué scandal and gossip.

Simultaneously, during the 19th century when it was popular to hire French maids and rumors of affairs were spreading, clubs in France where cancan dancers would perform in revealing outfits were prominent in French culture. With the budding stereotype of French maids in mind, burlesque shows in America began featuring the French maid stereotype in comedy-based sketches. American burlesque shows began depicting characters in the traditional French maid uniform- but now with a much shorter hemline- to allude to their scandalous reputation built off affair rumors, solidifying the sexualization of the French maid as a trope. The shortening of the hemline of the French maid uniform for performers in American burlesque shows reflected the cancan dancers in French clubs that were renowned for their short skirts. This started the shift of the French maid's practical uniform to a costume built off an erotic aesthetic.

American burlesque skits showed an American-based perception of the French maid stereotype combined with cancan dancer's costumes to create the fictional character of the French maid that was outfitted in a lingerie inspired outfit more closely related to the costumes of today. The classic and recognizable costume of the French maid is somewhat of a dusty corner in pop culture. The character and costume of the French maid is displayed on the periphery of mainstream media plots, while being more prevalent in pornographic-based media. An understanding of the historical development of French maids that has led to the black ultra mini skirt and frilly white apron combo can offer depth to the contemporary character trope.





ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

The Case for Hallmark Christmas Movies

By Mary Connelly

They may be cheesy, they may be corny, and they may be a bit predictable... but they truly do capture the essence of love and holiday cheer. Hallmark Christmas movies have largely become a staple in our holiday movie line-ups. There's just something about their light-hearted energy that keeps viewers coming back for more. And there's plenty of that "more" to go around -- The Hallmark Channel is currently playing these movies 24/7 as part of their "Countdown to Christmas." New films premiere every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. These movies radiate positivity in a way that is both inspiring and wishful. As many films tend to do (particularly romantic comedies), they sometimes give us unrealistic ideas and expectations of love and life (hence their too-good-to-be-true love stories and happy endings). However, are these ideas actually unrealistic? Is it really ridiculous for someone to hope for pure love, along with some Christmas joy? I don't think this is the case. I think we all deserve the type of happiness that is present in these beloved and sometimes-made-fun-of holiday season classics.



Prior to the second week of November of this year, I had never actually watched one of these masterpieces in full. When I caught a bad cold in the midst of going through a heartbreak, I found myself struggling to get off the couch. During this time, I decided to give these movies a chance. I consider myself an avid Christmas lover, but seldom watch many of these movies before December (I like to give Thanksgiving its moment). However, this decision quickly brought me some comfort through my uncomfortable situation. I quickly caught on to the fact that many of the same actors star in multiple films. I found this repetition to be comforting. Seeing Candace Cameron Bure appear on my screen in roughly every other movie has been an especially nostalgic-yet-positive experience for me, as I was a huge *Full House* fan as a kid. I also appreciate the combination of casts consisting of some big-name actors along with lesser-known faces. I have so far seen Tamera Mowry-Housley, Bethany Joy Lenz, and Jonathan Bennett appear on my screen, as well as actors I slightly recognize and some who I have never seen before.



While the romantic element of these movies have brought me some sadness considering my current situation, overall these films have brought me hope. Hope for happiness and holiday cheer. They have provided me with a sense of peace and joy in the midst of a tough time. As the film industry has done since it came to be, these movies have provided me with a cheery escape from the sometimes harsh realities of the world. However, for me, this escape has actually helped keep me grounded rather than put me in a haze of unrealistic expectations. They have caused me to really think about life, love, heartache, and what's truly important. Above all else, these films emphasize the importance of pure love, family, friends, and true happiness. Behind each film is a lesson. Some movies teach basically the same lesson (like I said, there is an element of repetition), but this does not make these teachings any less significant. Next time you're feeling down, I invite you to curl up on the couch (with a cat or two along with a warm cup of hot cocoa) and turn on The Hallmark Channel. You will thus be transported into a world of beautiful holiday decor, cozy cabins, and true love. The joyful cheer will no doubt get you in the Christmas spirit, while the sweet romances will warm your heart.

THE ALLIANCE WE NEEDED

THE MOST SUCCESSFUL ALLIANCE IN 'BIG BROTHER' HISTORY

By: Nicholas DeGennaro

After 23 seasons, this year, CBS's famed reality show, Big Brother, finally ended with its very first African American winner. Amid the Black Lives Matter movement, the network stated they were committed to creating inclusive programming and planned to have at least 50% of their casts include BIPOC contestants. So many wondered why the network had taken so long, after decades of shoeing in 1 or 2 non-white contestants, but nevertheless, this year, was a year to celebrate.

Xavier Prather won Big Brother's 23rd season with its largest prize in the show's history set at \$750,000. However, he didn't get there alone. Prather was part of "the most successful alliances in the show's history", the Cookout. The Cookout was an alliance dedicated to making sure the season saw its first Black winner. It not only saw that, but also its very first all-minority final 6. Azah Awasum, Derek Frazier, Hannah Chaddha, Kyland Young, Tiffany Mitchell, and Prather all made up the powerhouse alliance that dominated the season. They worked together to evict 10 houseguests before adopting an "every man and woman for themselves" attitude when it came down to just them remaining.



"The Cookout"

From left to right: Kyland Young, Hannah Chaddha, Derek Frazier, (winner) Xavier Prather, (runner-up) Azah Awasum, and Tiffany Mitchell.

This alliance came at a crucial time in the show's history. After a slew of seasons with racial allegations against contestants and minority houseguests being outnumbered and evicted from the game early, fans started to get hopeless that they would ever get to see a Black person win the game of Big Brother. That was until The Cookout and their all-important conquest. "The Alliance We Needed", trended through fans on Twitter.

Another CBS reality show, *Survivor*, is currently airing with its own all-minority alliance. In that show, season after season, large alliances of white contestants often vote out minority tribe members for a microcosm of reasons. In the 40 completed seasons of the show, they have only seen 4 Black winners, one of which is female.

Reality shows are supposed to be a mirror of reality, and what often becomes scripted, story-driven television is still plagued by the vices of the real world; sexism, homophobia, and racism. Yet, these shows draw in millions of viewers yearly, and the change to allow equal representation and equal opportunity for its contestants is bound to be refreshing.

These changes are about proving that everyone has equal potential to accomplish their dreams. Even if it's as silly as winning a reality competition show. It makes me happy knowing that young kids like me, sitting at home, can watch TV and see someone like themselves succeed; something I've taken for granted for much too long. There is still a lot of work to do, especially in the entertainment industry, but it seems as though networks are on the right path. We can only hope that Prather is one of many future BIPOC contestants to win *Big Brother*. And hopefully, he and his alliance, *The Cookout*, have blazed trails for many to come in the future.





CREEP



Light at the End of a Tunnel

By Zachary Kauz

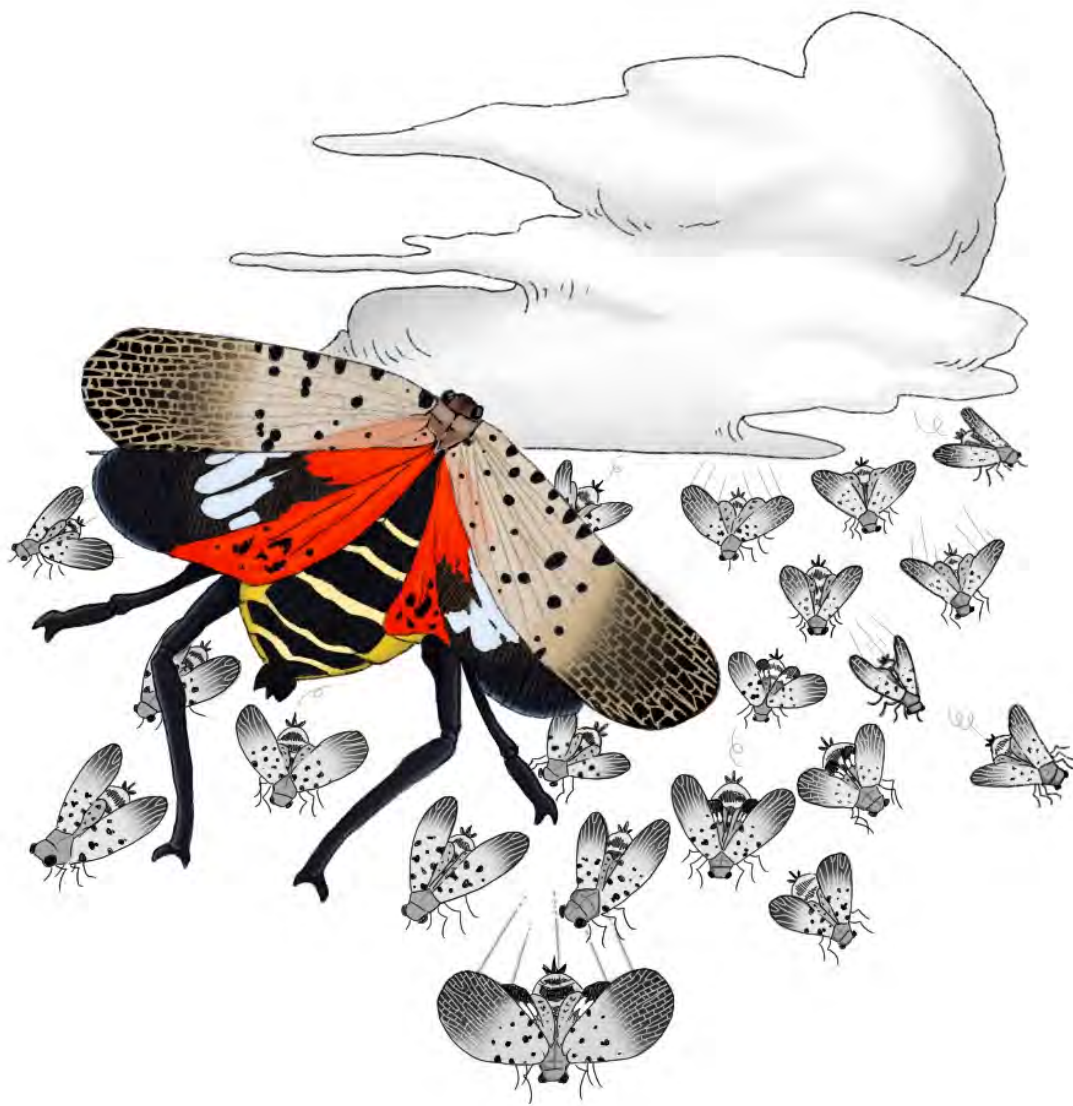
It arrived to me in a dream, the Earth in darkness; crops shriveled, the ground suffocated by soot. The sun itself enclosed by insects so life would be lived in perpetual shadow.

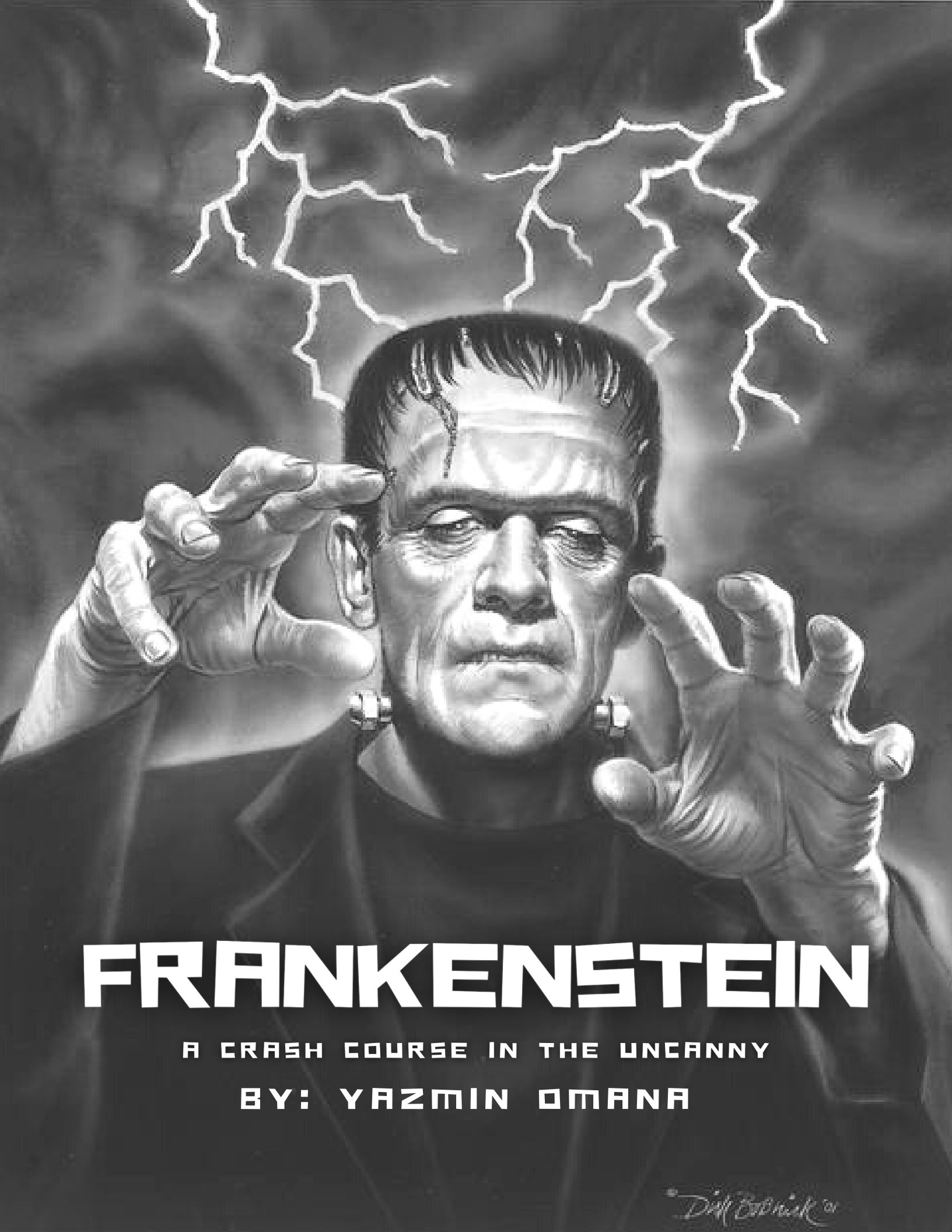
It may not be cloudy, but it always rains. Shards of red leapfrog off the ceiling in irregular arcs. They hit the ground but do not dissipate. Bodies weightless like droplets of water accumulate on the concrete, a center of sap encased in tree bark. We returned to campus after a year and a half, things couldn't be exactly the same. Littered like confetti on the sidewalks are lantern bugs in too great a quantity to destroy. As with much of the events of this strange decade, we just had to accept it. The pretty, intrusive, stupid insects landing on our arms, sitting next to us, indifferent to our presence. On the sidewalk like pieces of chewed gum, or between layers of glass doors, the spotted lanternflies are practically part of our campuses' fabric. One imagines exterminating the mobs with a flamethrower yet more likely trods their way back to their dorm exhaustedly, resigned to the insect's overwhelming presence.

"The urgent need to kill these vampiric beasts does not captivate us emotionally"

A threat to our natural surroundings they may be, yet the lanternflies put up a convincingly unassuming appearance lying lazily on the sidewalks, scarcely bothering the students commuting by them. In a decade so tumultuous, the threat of insects sucking the life out of crops seems illusory. Their presence is disastrous on a macro level yet a mild nuisance on the personal. The urgent need to kill these vampiric beasts does not captivate us emotionally. The consequences are intangible, their presence not overtly horrifying. Yet the sheer number of lanternflies flooding Livingston campus is a disconcerting, discouraging image confronting us every day.

The commute to 9 AM classes, where students are sporadically present; the horizon is perfectly still except for the twitching bodies cutting through the air with the force of their appendages. Dead or alive they indiscriminately reappear day-after-day, any progress in eliminating them erased. Unlike the Busch geese or Livingston coyote, the lanternfly is inescapable across all campuses. They are encased into the Rutgers experience. Are we simply too willing to learn to live with encroaching problems? Have we accepted the lanternfly as a permanent pillar of our lives? The great wave looming over us, crashing repeatedly. Perhaps it is a cosmic threat, bigger than us, incapable of control. Or perhaps our collective resistance can counteract the latest terror inflicted on our lives, rather than accepting it as the status quo.





FRANKENSTEIN

A CRASH COURSE IN THE UNCANNY

BY: YAZMIN OMANA

Dan Bodnick '01

"Satan had his companions, fellow-devils, to admire and encourage him; but I am solitary and detested,"; these cryptic words encapsulate the gothic world of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* — the cautionary tale on the dangers of science and the pursuit of knowledge, but more importantly, position themselves as the representation of the lonely and the "others." Around this time of the year, everyone remembers *Frankenstein*. Halloween is the holiday where we watch our favorite scary movies and re-read the most outlandish ghost stories and thrillers. A classic like Shelley's has distinguished itself among the plethora of horror surrounding this day since the early 1800s when it was originally published. Shelley's world is chilling -- full of the macabre and grotesque -- yet, apart from its dark aesthetics, there underlies a thematic analysis on the destructive forces found when searching for glory and greed beyond the way Nature intended it to be. Such devices create an effective structure for the uncanny motifs we adore about *Frankenstein*, and is where we get a front-row seat to Victor Frankenstein's demise at the hands of his own creation. These malevolent themes enhance the eerie nature of the book, encapsulate what we collectively love so much about Halloween, and are why we correlate *Frankenstein* to the season, but can we definitively say that this is the underlying uncanny factor about *Frankenstein*? *Frankenstein's* true horror lies in the terrifying ways we relate to Victor's "monster," and the necessity of community and connection. The argument in support of this monster endures as our collective notion of the creature based on media is false. No one wants to admit that what may be more horrifying than what *Frankenstein* is known for from surface-level adaptations is the way in which we can relate to the monster and his alienation.



The monster's adaptation of the human condition proves his embodiment of humanity -- just like us, but his physical deformation is what distinguishes him as a monster, and thus, an "it," to people. Although he is intrinsically different and symbolizes an "other" entity, Shelley provides a generality that often gets overlooked under the glamor of horror and the guise of the spooky, uncanny thematic underbelly of Frankenstein. Shelley exemplifies his understanding and kindness as the creature regularly aids a family by cutting and stocking wood in the night to protect them. In this way, he forms a special and wholesome bond with them; however, we have a belief that such a creature can only inflict pain and torture as a reflection of his outward appearance. Through art and books he understands the complexities of emotions and "an infinity of new images and feelings," -- on the very same page he even admits to feeling "similar" to the family he tends to, who are positioned as his only link to humanity and the greater public (142). Even the monster himself, trying to emulate humanity in vain, begs Victor for a wife to escape society with so he can be left alone, but Victor rejects this wish; instead, sentencing the monster to "be cut off from the world" in utter isolation and rejection which is true torture (157).



People anticipate his monstrosity and terror as a correlation to his demeanor, but in actuality, the creature is a product of abandonment, reflecting the true nature of humanity and our need for community. Frankenstein defines what is uncanny. What's even more eerie than its gothic horror elements, however, is Shelley's distinguished relatability between creature-to-human, and its implications on the importance of community and connection. The true nightmare of Frankenstein is not blatantly found within this creature, but hidden in the terrifying ways we may relate to the repercussions of "otherness," and his resulting isolation.



THE HISTORY OF *CLOWNS*

WRITTEN BY JESSIE BUTEN

As Halloween approaches and we turn to rewatch the horror movies that inspire premade PartyCity costumes there comes to be frequent encounters with various creepy clown characters. The Creepy Clown has become a pillar archetype of the horror industry (i.e Pennywise, 1982 Poltergeist clown doll scene, fourth season of American Horror Story, etc), going so far as to enter the reality of the public with the viral 2016 Killer Clown movement. But clowns have not always been feared. In fact, before the end of the 1970s, the clown was an innocent children entertainer. Since then, clowns have been steadily developing a bad reputation, a downfall from children's entertainers to horror culture icons.

COULROPHOBIA


Coulrophobia, the phobia of clowns, was not popularized until the 1980s, and before that, a large majority of the 20th-century clowns were seen in America as beloved children entertainers. Before the popularity of coulrophobia, American media had Bozo the clown. From the 1950s to the 1970s Bozo the Clown was the prototype for the happy clown entertainer. Bozo's character was franchised in 1956, and by 1970 different Bozo performers were viewed and beloved by millions of Americans on TV. Bozo inhabited the role to children in the 1970s that The Wiggles filled for children in the early 2000s. He had live performances around the country and a television show, both were fairly successful and celebrated.

American attitudes towards clowns began to shift from Bozo's innocence towards fear in 1978 when the serial killer John Wayne Gacy was arrested. Separate from his crimes, Gacy spent his free time dressing up as a clown named Pogo to entertain children in his community. Despite Gacy's work as a clown having nothing to do with his murders, his very public trial quickly became associated with his clowning. John Wayne Gacy was deemed America's first Killer Clown, defining the moment that attitudes towards clowns made a turn toward horror.

America's uncertainty of clowns grew because of Gacy, and the growing fear of clowns became tied to the fear of serial killers. The concept underlying the growing fear was a newfound awareness of the human beneath the clown makeup, and the possibility for that human to be a criminal. As the 1980s progressed and a fear of clowns grew, there were Creepy Clown sightings throughout America that were the precursor to the clown sightings in 2016.

In 1981, a Boston school district sent out a memo to parents based on reports from students. The memo warned parents of clowns in vans that were offering candy to children around the school, a classic stranger danger warning that instilled fear in the community. Situations like this started to happen more across America. Reports of creepy clowns without actual evidence of the creepy clowns became quite popular.





The creepy clown outbreak of the early 80s was followed up by the first instances of mainstream horror media portraying creepy clown characters. Its appearance in horror solidified the clown's media portrayal distinguished from the children's entertainer origins. Stephen King's novel "It" was published in 1982 capitalizing on the public's growing fear of clowns with the character Pennywise. Pennywise's success led to the development of more clown characters across American horror.

The clown trend in horror steadily maintained until reaching a pinnacle in 2016, the year of the media phenomenon of killer clowns. The viral trend started with a sighting of a clown in Wisconsin that went viral, other sightings began to be reported almost immediately. Notably, the original 2016 clown sighting was a publicity stunt for a horror film that was released in 2018 titled Gags. Then later in South Carolina, children reported a (capitalist) clown trying to lure them into the woods with money. By way of social media and the phenomenon of a viral post, the second wave of creepy clown sightings was able to reach more people and cause more fear.

The clown sightings in the digital age of 2016 became strikingly modern with the clowns switching out candy for money and the presence of social media making it easier for news to spread about copycat clowns.



The second wave of creepy clown sightings was not dependent on professional news outlets to report sightings, rather the ease of a tweet allowed for a Blair Witch effect leaving media consumers unaware of what was real and what was fake.

The history of clowns as culture icons leading up to 2016 has guided the once children entertainers into the nightmares of Americans. And the integration of cyberspace into the clown's timeline has empowered the new identity of the Creepy Clown.



A FORGOTTEN NIGHTMARE, OR
MASTERPIECE?

THE CAT IN THE HAT (2003)

By Vanessa Tirok



When the live-action movie adaptation of “The Cat in the Hat” came out in the early 2000s, most of us were just children, oblivious to the film’s many dirty jokes. We took delight in its colorful chaos, the musical numbers, and the whimsical comedy. Well, many of us Gen-Z’s have grown since then and have likely forgotten about the movie, or, if you’re a Cat in the Hat hater, wish you had forgotten it.

The whole premise of the story is quite nightmarish: two children are left under the watch of a narcoleptic babysitter when an anthropomorphic feline breaks in, wreaking havoc on their lives, destroying their home and forcing them to have “fun” against their will (in terms of accuracy to the book, this is probably the only thing that the movie got right). From the many reviews that I’ve read pertaining to this movie, it’s clear to see that it didn’t live up to many people’s expectations. Movie critics at the time hoped for something more wholesome, more nostalgic than a foul-mouthed cat. Some critics claimed the movie to be an artistic nightmare, laden with lifeless CG, and completely corrupted by Hollywood. According to critics, “The Cat in the Hat” was inappropriate, an insult to Dr. Seuss. In fact, the movie was considered such a failure that Audrey Geisel, the widow of Dr. Seuss, banned all future live-action adaptations of her husband’s work as a result of it. Yes, it was that bad.



But let's get real here, these criticisms were made by adults who probably have no business watching a children’s movie anyway. I speak for the generation who grew up with this absurd movie and loved it.

There are a number of elements that add up to make the cinematic masterpiece that is “the Cat in the Hat”.



First is the cat, who is so unnecessarily difficult and unpleasant that it's comical. Though chaotic, he proves to be a dynamic entertainer, going out his way to bring fun (or at least *his* idea of fun) to two bored kids. He comes prepared for anything, from costume changes to breaking out into song to Kupkake-inator infomercials. He even has his lawyers on hand at all times, and switches from a New York accent to a Manchester accent with ease. He can make jokes about "drunken clowns with hepatitis" as easily as he can sew his tail back together after chopping it in two. He's also a pro at physical comedy; a scene that comes to mind is the one where Cat gets batted in the balls so hard that he has psychedelic visions because of it.

Aside from the cat, the characters added on to the movie version of the story make it all the more intriguing. Joan, for example, is a single mother working hard as a real estate agent, struggling to keep her house under control due to her ill-behaved son, Conrad. She also struggles to please her boss, Mr. Humberfloob, who is a germaphobe. We also get to know Larry, Joan's love interest, a gold-digging bum disguising himself as a hard-working man, who also plans to ship Conrad off to military school once he secures the bag with Joan.

And who can forget the beloved Mrs. Kwan, who manages to stay asleep throughout 90% of the movie? With the addition of these quirky characters alongside the original characters from the book, the story feels more complete.

The movie is filled with absurdities that will make you laugh and question your sanity. For instance, somehow the children's house is turned into an amusement park, where Mrs. Kwan not only goes on a rollercoaster ride while unconscious, but she becomes the rollercoaster ride. The chase scene is also quite hilarious. While the 4 year old me may have found it funny, the 20 year old me questions, "Why are they going into an underground rave? This is a children's movie! And why is Paris Hilton there?"

Much like the book itself, the movie was never meant to be taken seriously, and so I find the upset reactions towards it to be a bit baffling. Yes, it may have a few adult jokes here and there, and yes I may be biased in my opinion because I fell in love with this movie when I was four and had no taste in cinema. But in the end, it is a movie that was made for 2000s kids like me, and not for middle-aged film critics. So love the movie or not, there is a valuable lesson to be taken away from it, which is to have fun, and lighten up a little.



THE HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN

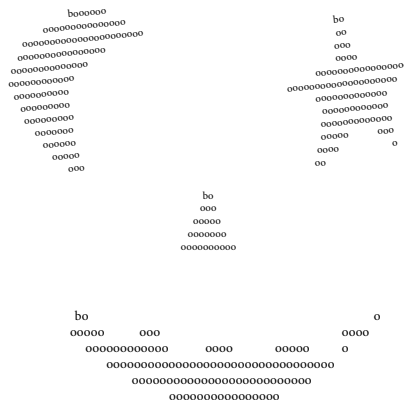
By Mary Connolly

Every October, the Halloween season comes along and evokes feelings of excitement and a fun type of fear. People dress up in ominous costumes and collect candy from their neighbors. Horror movies play on repeat throughout the month. At any other time, driving past a front yard filled with skeletons and bloodied monsters would have someone ready to dial 9-1-1. However, during the fall season, this type of decor is not only from judgement, but encouraged. It is reasonable to wonder how this fun-but-creepy holiday of Halloween began.

Halloween began 2,000 years ago with the Celtic festival called Samhain. According to the editors of History.com, the Celtic New Year took place on November 1. They believed that the ghosts of those who passed came back to earth on October 31. Then there's the matter of All Saints' Day, which was developed from the Catholic feast of All Martyrs Day. The editors of History.com note that people recognized this day by dressing up as saints, angels

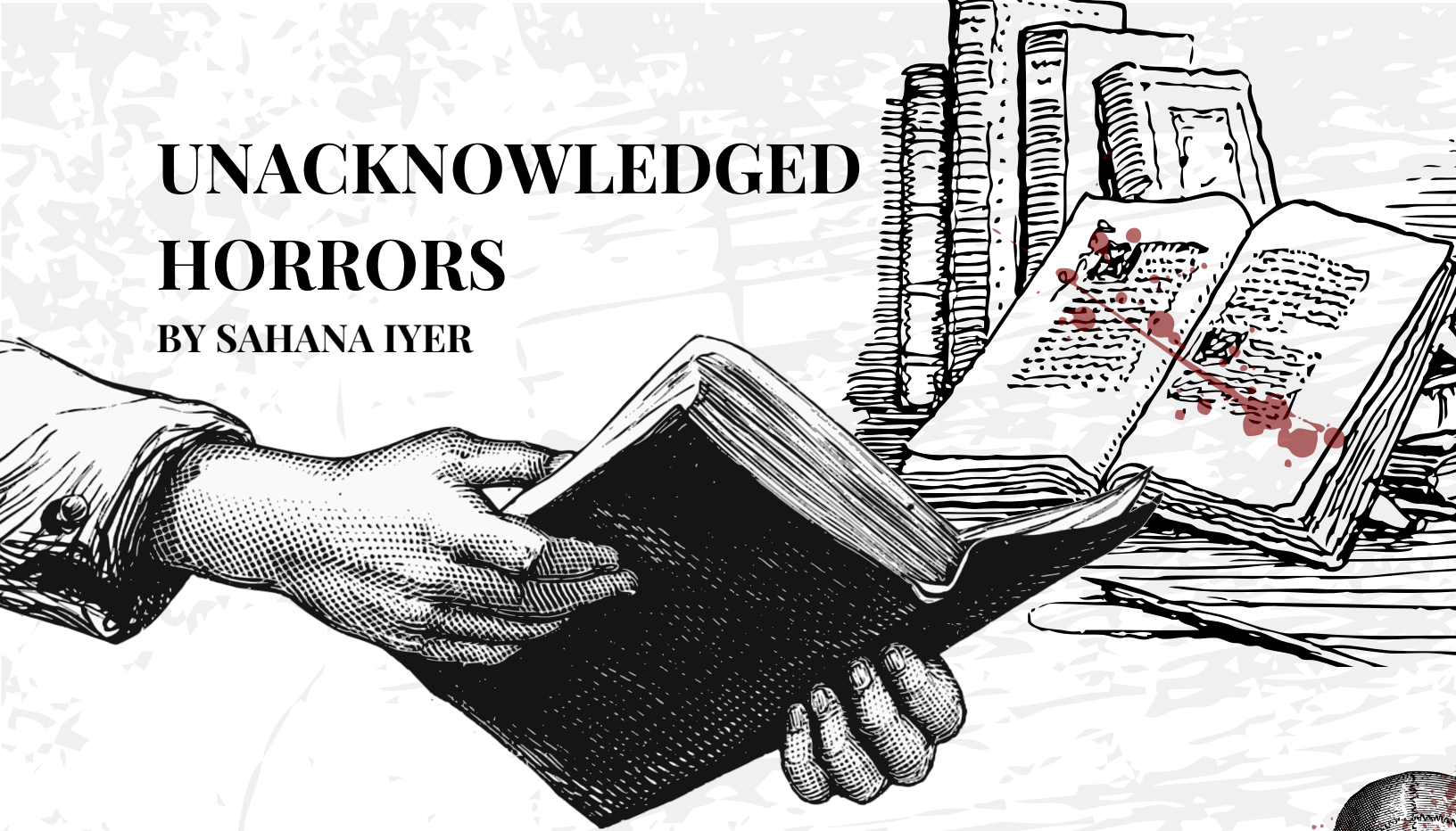
and devils. They also hosted parades and bonfires to commemorate the day. This celebration was also referred to as All-hallows, which then developed into All-Hallows Eve before the name Halloween was born. The holiday was not celebrated in America until the second part of the 19th century.

With Halloween holding American culture so captively, it's strange to think that it was around for such a long time before finally being introduced to the United States. Today, stores fill their aisles with jack-o-lanterns and witch hats as early as August. People simply cannot wait for this holiday to come around the second they feel the autumn chill in the air -- and honestly, who could blame them? While it may be full of strange superstitions and eerie tales, Halloween has truly become an American staple and an annual tradition around the globe. With "spooky season" thriving among us once again, it is rather compelling to reflect on the origins that got us here.



UNACKNOWLEDGED HORRORS

BY SAHANA IYER

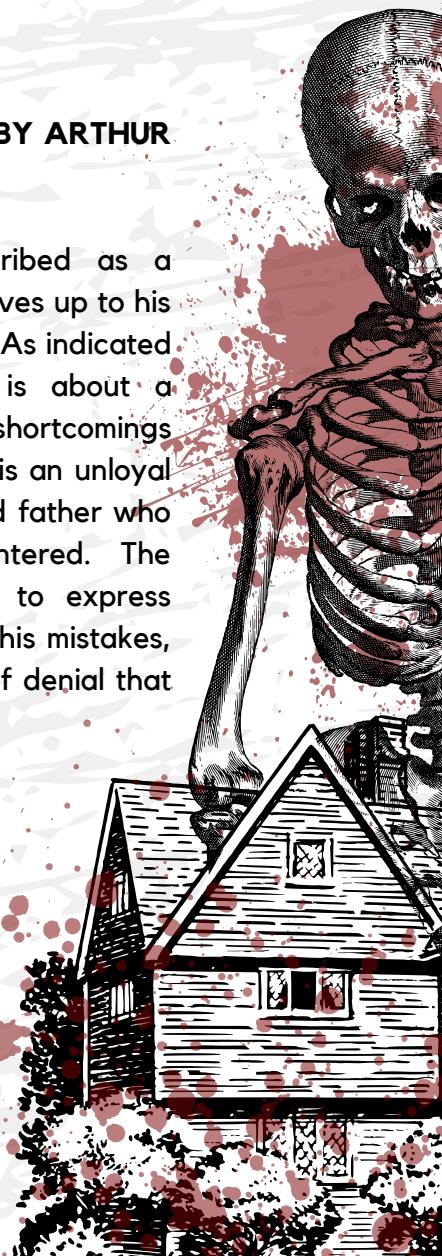


IN COLD BLOOD BY TRUMAN CAPOTE

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote is a renowned true crime novel; it paved the way for the true crime genre both on screen and on paper. The setting is primarily in Holcomb, Kansas—in the year 1959. A propitious ranch family, the Clutters, on the River Valley Farm, is brutally murdered as a consequence of an unsuccessful heist. Perry Smith and Richard “Dick” Hickok, the two murderers, did not adhere to their intention of simple thievery. The underlying dilemma is whether the deviant duo feels emotion over their consequential actions or indifference, for indifference does not make an adequate motive for murder. The horror lies not within the frightening or gory aspects of the murders. It lies within the disbelief that fellow humans have the capacity to orchestrate impassive kills.

DEATH OF A SALESMAN BY ARTHUR MILLER

Arthur Miller, often described as a modern horror playwright, lives up to his title in *Death of a Salesman*. As indicated by the name, the book is about a substandard salesman with shortcomings in all aspects of his life; he is an unloyal husband and a disrespected father who is content being self-centered. The salesman, Willy, continues to express self-loathing and guilt over his mistakes, creating a turbulent cycle of denial that affects his family members.



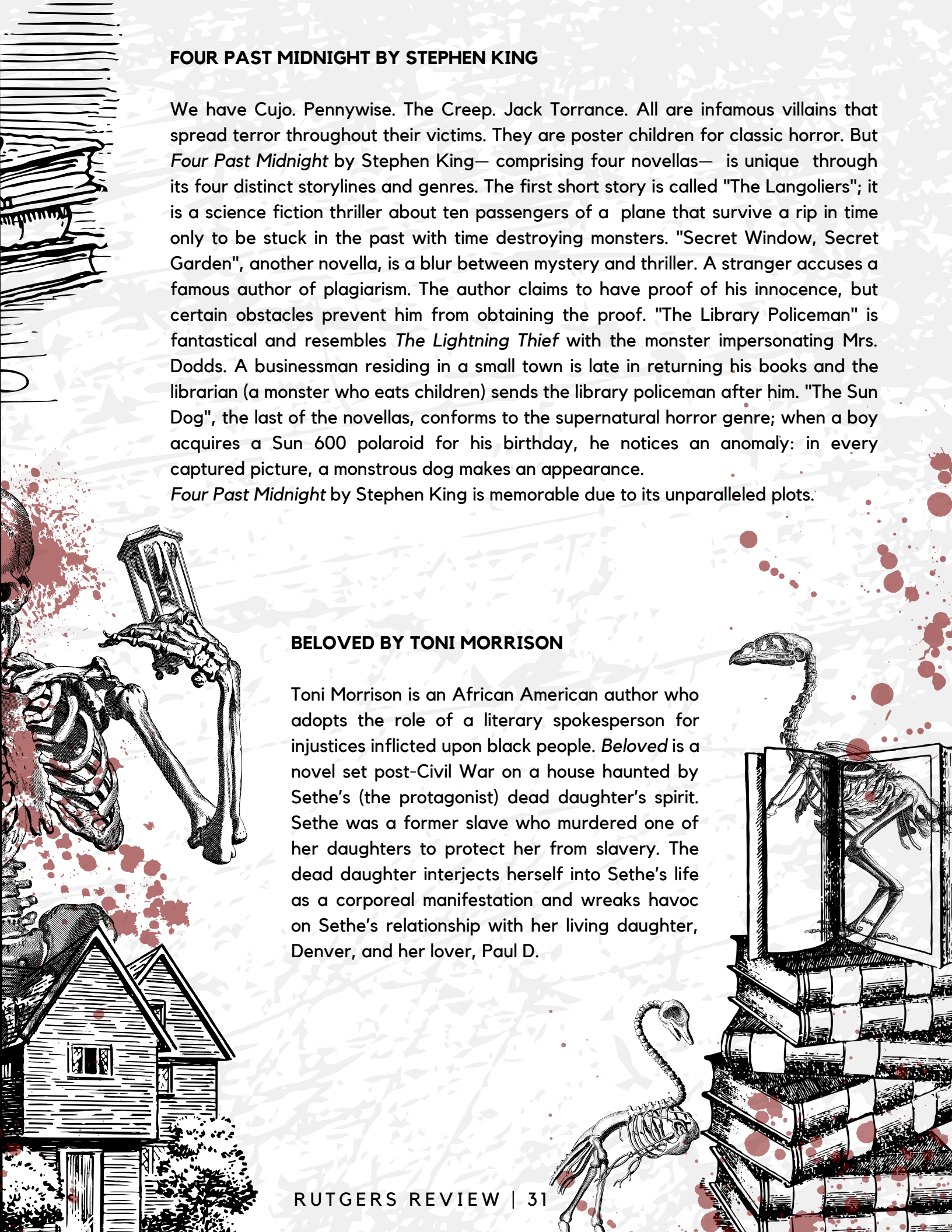
FOUR PAST MIDNIGHT BY STEPHEN KING

We have Cujo. Pennywise. The Creep. Jack Torrance. All are infamous villains that spread terror throughout their victims. They are poster children for classic horror. But *Four Past Midnight* by Stephen King— comprising four novellas— is unique through its four distinct storylines and genres. The first short story is called "The Langoliers"; it is a science fiction thriller about ten passengers of a plane that survive a rip in time only to be stuck in the past with time destroying monsters. "Secret Window, Secret Garden", another novella, is a blur between mystery and thriller. A stranger accuses a famous author of plagiarism. The author claims to have proof of his innocence, but certain obstacles prevent him from obtaining the proof. "The Library Policeman" is fantastical and resembles *The Lightning Thief* with the monster impersonating Mrs. Dodds. A businessman residing in a small town is late in returning his books and the librarian (a monster who eats children) sends the library policeman after him. "The Sun Dog", the last of the novellas, conforms to the supernatural horror genre; when a boy acquires a Sun 600 polaroid for his birthday, he notices an anomaly: in every captured picture, a monstrous dog makes an appearance.

Four Past Midnight by Stephen King is memorable due to its unparalleled plots.

BELOVED BY TONI MORRISON

Toni Morrison is an African American author who adopts the role of a literary spokesperson for injustices inflicted upon black people. *Beloved* is a novel set post-Civil War on a house haunted by Sethe's (the protagonist) dead daughter's spirit. Sethe was a former slave who murdered one of her daughters to protect her from slavery. The dead daughter interjects herself into Sethe's life as a corporeal manifestation and wreaks havoc on Sethe's relationship with her living daughter, Denver, and her lover, Paul D.





MUSIC

Remi Wolf's, Juno, Sounds like the Party You Never Got Invited To

Written by Yazmin Omana

If you're like most fans, Remi Wolf's debut album, *Juno*, has been playing on repeat nonstop the past few weeks. For those who are not familiar with the 25-year-old, indie artist, Wolf encapsulates a Y2K glamor and Gen-Z infused aesthetic, but undoubtedly has the amalgamated sound of 90s and 80s influences. Wolf has crawled to her come up with EPs *You're a Dog*, and *I'm Allergic to Dogs!*, but exploded on the scene with her 2020 single, "Monte Carlo." Her titular history only continues, and it comes to no surprise that her debut album is named after none other than Juno, her French Bulldog. To those who have followed Wolf's sound since her first release in 2019, *Juno* is imbued with as much chaos as ever. *Juno*'s LSD-ified sound takes its listeners on a technicolor kaleidoscope escape, yet touches on her innermost struggles with alcoholism during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Wolf weaves her alcoholism narrative thoughtfully, yet playfully, throughout her record. The first track off the album, "Liquor Store," pens about her fears of abandonment, and subsequent reliance on alcohol, saying, "You can go if you want to/But you know my mind will be walking a tightrope." Eventually, Wolf admits, in her brash style, that "I always want more walking into the liquor store." This was Wolf's watershed moment after having returned from months worth of rehab centers and catalyzes the further exploration of her substance abuse within the album. Above all else, Wolf is excruciatingly self-aware. In "Grumpy Old Man," she further touches on her alcoholism, blaring, "I'm so defensive...I got whiskey in my shower," or when she choruses, "I don't want to be a Debbie Downer!" on "Quiet On Set," after too much serious talk. These moments of blatant honesty are on-brand for Wolf's writing style and philosophical keystones. The indie star's ability to embed serious and deeply personal work within zany and shiny landscapes is what fans love so much about Wolf's work. The star plays touch-and-go with this heavy theme matter as she balances alcoholism, abandonment, and family trauma with eccentric and funky interpolations. What we do know is this -- Wolf, in her darkest pockets of the record, in all her glory, is the most vivid and sparkly, and we can't help but love her for it.



Wolf's hyper-colored dreamland interprets 2020 quarantine with "Anthony Kiedis," the 3-minute pandemic anthem that essentially unfolds as background, dancing music in memory of our collective coronavirus experience. She easily summarizes Gen-Z's dismay with, "everything's shut down, and I don't have feelings." Wolf has a knack for tackling these depressing topics with high-energy melodies and harmonies that stop us from feeling too bad for ourselves. She lifts us up even more with track 3 -- "wyd," -- a chant, a revelation for Gen-Z's mental health epidemic. The hit feels like a "the kids will be alright" declaration, and doesn't come a moment too soon. Even the outro quips, "I don't need your validation/Cuz I got me and my medication." Other songs on the album aren't as on-the-nose with their subject matter, but nonetheless exemplify Wolf's expertise on creating dizzying beats. "Guerilla"'s "Queen-esque" energy is like a digital mish-mash of brazen harmonies that encapsulates club culture, but she slaps you back to reality when she affirms, "yeah bitch!" The same can be said about the confusing "Buttermilk," -- an electrical, yet scary dance. Dancing through "Buttermilk," we trip, twist, and fall into the pit of Wonderland itself; it is sonically a rhythmic handshake that doesn't really make much sense.

Hearing a few of her songs you can tell Wolf is insanely talented at juxtaposing weird, funky music with her symbolic and impressive lyricism. We see it when she surfs the bouncy melody of track twelve's, "Buzz Me In," but she doesn't let the music distract from her message as she indulges in a relationship that's accumulated tears that taste "like wasted time." Although she cries and knows that this relationship is a fickle thing, she doesn't seem to care, and we don't either. As the song's airy energy lifts us up we all begin insisting too -- "I'm at the gate, will you buzz me in?" "Front Tooth" is the album's moment of mindfulness as Wolf let's "the water wake my body up!"



While "Street You Live On" bookends the album; she hits the nail on the head of heartbreak while blaring, "I avoid the street that you live on." The angst penetrates too deep with its nostalgic melody and vulnerable lyrics that point to her powerlessness drowning in the misery. It's entirely relatable and really does speak to the youth; after all, we all can scream, "you're a magnet pulling my feet and my head off" to that someone. Wolf balances quippy, cheeky lyrics, arbitrary pop-culture name droppings, or silly interpolations like dolphin whistles in "Front Tooth," with symbolic revelations of being a "serial farmer," that "harvests the drama." There is much to say about the future of funk and pop's love child, Remi Wolf, but for now we can all enjoy what we hope to be the first of many idiosyncratic masterpieces. Juno is nothing short of a wild and hazy fever dream, but is a trip we all can experience over and over again as we hit the replay button and drift into the fluorescence.



#FREEBRITNEY

The Hashtag that Took Over Social Media... and then the World.



Why the #Free Britney Movement is so Important

By Nick DeGennaro

It has been just about 5 months since global pop superstar Britney Spears testified virtually in a Los Angeles courtroom to end the court-appointed conservatorship that has “taken control of her life”. The 23-minute long testimony features Britney Spears outlining the inhumane treatment she has undergone since her father, Jamie Spears, was named the sole conservator of her estate.

The conservatorship, which started in 2008, was put in place to “protect” Britney's fortune and life after she suffered a mental breakdown that put her in a hospital. Since then, Britney has released 4 studio albums, completed 3 worldwide tours, and performed a 248-show concert residency in Las Vegas. Yet, she has just as many rights as a little girl. 13 years later, Britney has finally spoken out for the first time against her father and shared her wishes to end the “abusive” conservatorship.

Throughout her time in court, Britney dropped several bombshells covering the unimaginable control that the conservatorship has on her life; one of them being her right to reproduce. Britney said, "I have an [IUD] inside my body right now... This so-called team won't let me go to the doctor to take it out because they don't want me to have any more children." The simple statement set off national headlines.

Since the 1970s many states have granted women under the age of 18 the ability to control their own bodies (through birth control) without parental consent. But here is Britney Spears, a 39-year-old mother of two, who is not allowed to continue to have her own family because of the control of her father.

Another bombshell Britney dropped was when she equated the conservatorship to "sex trafficking" because she was being "forced" to work. In 2018, Britney says she felt threatened to sign on to do her "Piece of Me" Tour after the completion of her Las Vegas residency under the same name. As a loyal fan and someone who saw her on that tour, it makes me sick knowing that the night that I regard as one of the best of my life happened because Britney felt "forced" and "threatened" to do it. Yet, she did do it, all 31 shows. If this doesn't warrant the utmost respect from the public, I don't know what does.

The star also addressed in her testimony that she had been "embarrassed" to talk about the situation for fear of public opposition. Britney admitted to lying on social media. In one Instagram post, Britney says, "I'm totally fine. I'm extremely happy." However, in court she admits, "I'm not happy. I can't sleep. I'm so angry it's insane. And I'm depressed. I cry every day."





The last few months brought an outcry of support from fellow celebrities and former collaborators on social media. Longtime friends like Justin Timberlake and Christina Aguilera showed their love for the woman they knew as a young girl. And a more recent collaborator, Iggy Azalea, noted how she witnessed the mistreatment of Britney by her father first-hand whilst working with her in promoting their 2015 song, *Pretty Girls*. In her tweet, Azalea noted that Britney was restricted from the most “bizarre” things including “how many sodas [Britney] was allowed to drink”. New reports even show that a former security firm monitored her phone and placed a listening device in her bedroom.

The fight for Britney’s freedom has almost reached its end. After hiring celebrity lawyer Matt Rosengart, Britney has been able to suspend her father from his conservator position, and on November 12, 2021, a hearing will determine whether or not to suspend the conservatorship altogether. And in the few weeks leading up to this final hearing, Britney has not been silent. Long-winded Instagram captions had stated countless times how she wishes to see her family in jail and is ready for a new life. It seems as though she has taken that first step to that new life in getting engaged to her boyfriend of almost 5 years, fitness influencer, Sam Ashgari.

Although the #FreeBritney movement may be reaching its end in actually “freeing” Britney, it’s important to understand the implications behind what a simple hashtag meant and was able to do. Supporting the #FreeBritney movement was about supporting reproductive rights for women. Supporting the #FreeBritney movement was about advocating for mental health. And lastly, supporting the #FreeBritney movement is about supporting basic human rights. Because of the power of this hashtag, Britney Spears was able to get her life back. I can only wish so much joy and happiness to someone who throughout their career has done the same for me and millions of fans worldwide.

#FreeBritney.

A woman with long, straight blonde hair is shown in profile, looking upwards. Her face is partially visible, showing her eyes, nose, and mouth. The background is a dark, textured surface. At the top of the image, a portion of a black vinyl record is visible, showing its grooves and a white label area.

Back with a Bang

By: Anastasia
Codjebas

After not blessing our ears with new music for the past six years (since her last album in 2015), Adele finally released her album, *30*, on Spotify on November 19th, which has everyone around the world buzzing. While her last album only offered physical or downloadable sales when it first came out, only being available on streaming services later on, *30* hit streaming services right away. The album appears to be inspired by Adele's recent divorce with Simon Konecki, motherhood, and the struggle with reestablishing her identity. As she claims, it was a result of "the most turbulent period of my life."

It is not a surprise that she continues to break personal and worldwide records. Before the release of the full album, the song "Easy on Me" already appeared on the Billboard Hot 100 ranking 68th after only five hours of being available in the country, marking Adele's 14th career entry on the Hot 100. Only three days after the release of *30*, it was 2021's best-selling album in the US, with over 500,000 copies sold within the first half of the week. She already had the biggest sales week of 2021, topping Taylor Swift's recent release of *Red (Taylor's Version)*.

Surrounding her release was also her one and only request to Spotify to remove the default shuffle option on new albums, which Spotify fulfilled. She explained it by saying, "We don't create albums with so much care and thought into our track listing for no reason. Our art tells a story and our stories should be listened to as we intended. Thank you Spotify for listening." It only makes sense to give the artist the power to decide how they want their work to be heard and interpreted, especially with how emotionally invested she sounds in every song.

Personally, I only became a fan of Adele's as I listened to more of her songs throughout the last few years, so I got to listen to her new music just as it came out. Although it may be difficult to relate to her individual life journey, anyone can find bits of their pain, heartbreak, loss, loneliness, and uncertainty in her songs. "My Little Love," for example, lets us in on Adele's vulnerability as she shares snippets of conversations with her son about feeling lost and overwhelmed.

As Pitchfork perfectly puts it, "It's hard to imagine something more personal than the empathy bombs that Adele typically drops, but she did not lie about *30*. Here, she's telling a more unexpected story about love: What it means to inflict that pain on your family, to rebuild yourself from scratch, and—big exhale—to try to love again."



RED



RED

(Taylors Version)

and the Timelessness of a Heartbreak Album

By: Ummekulsum Alishah

Taylor Swift's world-renowned discography is celebrated for many reasons: her catchy pop hits, stunning music videos, scream-in-your-car breakup anthems, and painfully honest lyrics. So when news broke out that she would be rerecording her first six albums, there was a lot of conversation as to how she would pull this off. The re-release of *Fearless* was a huge success, showcasing her stronger vocals and never before seen "from the vault" tracks that gave fans a fresh perspective into her songwriting as a teenager.

Theories spread like wildfire on social media, and when it was finally announced that *Red* would be the next released project, I couldn't contain my excitement. It's a true breakup album from cover to cover, and one that I hold close to my heart, specifically for its unwavering honesty and unapologetic lyrics. Every song is a testament to the complexity of the human experience, and how isolating heartbreak can feel. In a world where people, especially young women, are constantly told to move on and "stop being dramatic", it was refreshing to see a prominent female artist write about all of those micro emotions that one can feel after losing someone or something. I've listened to "State of Grace" on chilly morning walks, shouted the lyrics to "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together" during car rides with friends, and played "All Too Well" in my bedroom when days felt long. Not only did *Red* solidify Swift's place as a force to be reckoned with in the music industry, but it also made fans feel seen and understood.

The highlight of *Red (Taylor's Version)* before it was even released was the 10 minute version of, what is considered her greatest song of all time, "All Too Well". I listened to it in my bedroom a little while past midnight, eyes closed, leaning against the wall, exhausted from a long week of studying for exams. The somber guitar strings added a sense of nostalgia, verses flowing in and out of one another like poetry. The delivery of each line was phenomenal, simmering with a quiet intensity that made my chest ache. I was transported to a moment in time that I had never experienced, and that's how I knew the song was a masterpiece. Paired with a short film written and directed by Swift herself, and starring Dylan O'Brien and Sadie Sink, I fully believe that all ten minutes got their rightfully deserved recognition.

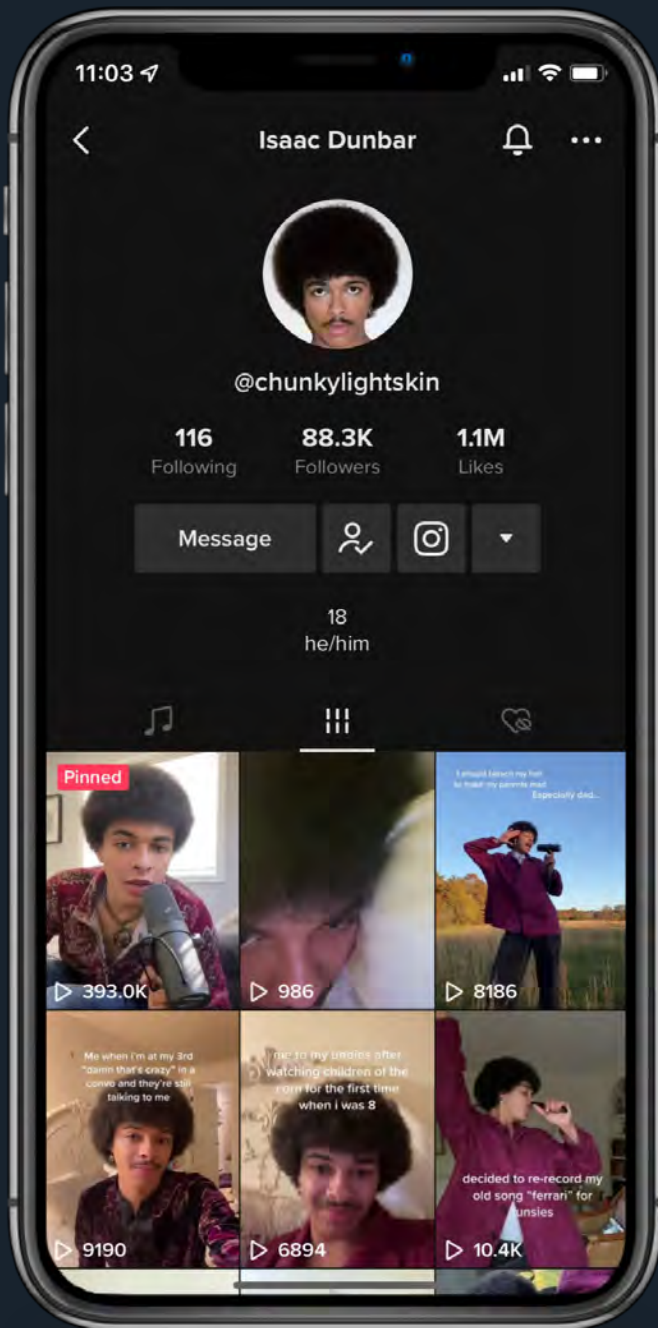


I spoke to my friend Abel, and we both agreed that the instrumentation and vocal mixing on this album compared to the original was more acoustic-focused, richer in sound and deeper in pitch. It carries the unspoken quality of someone who is looking back on a lived experience with the wisdom that comes with age and the passage of time. To the untrained ear, both albums would sound nearly identical, which accomplishes the goal of the re recordings. I loved hearing the little note changes on songs like "Red" and "I Almost Do", the collaborations on "Everything Has Changed" (feat. Ed Sheeran) and "The Last Time" (feat. Gary Lightbody) that sounded new and improved. The only aspect of the re-recording that I disliked was surprisingly her most popular tracks, "I Knew You Were Trouble", "22", and "We Are Never Getting Back Together". I felt that the youthful energy and tone captured in the original recording wasn't quite there in the 2021 release. On the flipside, the vault tracks truly were the icing on the cake. I'm a sucker for a catchy pop song, and so "Message in a Bottle" and "The Very First Night" were instant favorites. I fell in love with "Better Man" all over again, as I had been listening to the live version on Youtube for years, and "Ronan" still brings me to tears every time. The video for "I Bet You Think About Me" was clever and delightful, and "Nothing New" (feat. Phoebe Bridgers) took my breath away with it's painful vulnerability and soft vocals, perfectly expressing the anxiety and fear that comes with growing up.

Listening to this album is like putting on your favorite cardigan (*folklore* reference!). It's a trip down memory lane, a catharsis of all of the emotions that come with missing someone and the person you once were. It carries the powerful message of knowing that even though everything will be okay, it's normal to not feel like that in the moment. A truly great heartbreak album is timeless and worth listening to for a long, long time - and it's safe to say that *Red (Taylor's Version)* is never going out of style.

FROM FOR YOU PAGE TO FRONT ROW

BY NICK DEGENNARO



Just under a year ago, I was sitting in my room in the midst of a virtual semester thanks to the pandemic. Breakfast happened at noon, my bedroom became my dorm room, and the virtual class was a time to turn your camera off, dissociate, and scroll through Tik Tok. Whilst scrolling one day, I came across a song, "Makeup Drawer". "Wow, this is good," I thought to myself. I clicked on the sound in the lower right corner of the Tik Tok and found the artist, Isaac Dunbar. At the time, he had a few thousand followers on Tik Tok. Coming across a small artist whose music I like is very rare. For me, someone who is so engulfed in pop culture and what's trending, finding an artist like this was like finding a goldmine. I quickly went to Isaac's Apple Music and listened to everything. Turns out I was obsessed.

Isaac's discography quickly flooded my top songs for the year, surpassing all my usual contenders. I talked about him to all my friends to the point where most of them were either annoyed or started to listen to him themselves.

The release of Isaac's EP, *Evil Twin*, came in February 2021, shortly after I discovered him. It included one of my favorite songs of his, "fan behavior". The song, like most of Isaac's, blends pop with the perfect amount of alternative and relatable lyrics about relationships and young adult life in general.

In July of 2021, Isaac posted rescheduled tour dates for his 2020 tour that was postponed because of the pandemic. Tickets sold out immediately. I was devastated.

Three months later, a week before the show, I see a comment beneath his Instagram of someone selling one of their tickets. Do I trust this person? Was it a scam? I didn't care. \$20 later, I secured myself a ticket to see Isaac. One week and one skipped lecture later, there I was catching a PATH train into the city by myself to see someone who had once only existed through my Tik Tok For You page.

It was the smallest concert I'd ever been to, it might as well have been hosted in my own living room. Just under 100 people filled the Mercury Lounge on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. And there I was, standing in front of the stage, inches away from Isaac's microphone. Isaac opened the show with my favorite, "fan behavior", and the night only got better from there. Me and the 4 friends I met while waiting in line were screaming every word to every song. You had no purpose being there if you weren't able to do just that.

Everybody in that room was a fan. He went through just over a dozen songs in his limited discography with standout performances, "comme de garçon (like the boys)", "blonde", and "makeup drawer" being among the crowd's favorites. He also premiered an unreleased song "bleach" which he has been leaking slowly but surely on Tik Tok.

After the show had finished, he stood outside the venue for a free meet and greet. It would be the first time I met someone famous, although I'm sure most people reading could argue he is not famous at all. When it was my turn to meet him, I ran right up and gave him a hug. I thanked him for all his music and he thanked me right back for coming to the show. I told him I had skipped my lecture; "No wayyyyy!" he screamed. We took a few pictures and a selfie. He was just as kind and quirky as he seemed.

The night finished with the usual post-concert depression and an F train ride back uptown. It was one of the best decisions I had made. I'm not saying to always trust sketchy tickets being sold in Instagram comments, but it's worth the try.

Tik Tok has truly changed my perception of the music industry. You don't have to be a huge well-known pop artist to break through to users. All you need is the luck of the algorithm (and a little bit of talent). Next time you hear that catchy Tik Tok sound or see a new funky artist, check them out. You never know who they'll become or what they'll do for you.





POTPOURRI

I ' E T E R N E I

*eternity in common parlance
defines infinite time - symmetrical Also
describing as what exists outside of time*

Supernatural beings

And

Nonlinear forces

Sempiternity corresponds

To the temporal recited in requiem prayers A

kind of mourning

To endure for always

It is a permanent now



ANASTASIA CODJEBAS

IMPRESSIONISM

*an object is never as rigid
as a painting makes it out to be
when you paint something its constantly
in flux
never standing still
the lines the lack of angles the vagueness
a more realistic depiction
like the sunrise
visual symbolism of French poetry
abandonment of traditional syntax
with an emphasis on the suggestive
power of individual words
deliberate separation in fragmented
feelings
small motives that come and go
chords in parallel motion generate stasis
create a kind of longing for the cadence
that never seems to come
suppression of narrative impulsion
and ambiguity of the poetic voice
when you go to your favorite park
today and tomorrow and the next day
with changing light and color
it is never the same
we attempt to capture moments
that are fleeting, passing
but you don't experience life
in the way that you take a photograph*



PHOTO BY HANNAH
ALLOCCO

THE HALLOWS' EVE DANCE

*Dancing trees behind the leaves,
the earth hollow beneath my feet.*

*Brown, red, orange, golden;
A stolen memory from Hallows' past.*

*Crinkling oak and wrinkling maple,
printed dirt and fallen twigs.
A ghost emerging from the moon's harrowed
shadow;
Broken, barren, empty.*

Poem By Mary Connelly



PHOTO BY BRIAN MORTON-SALLEY



PHOTO BY HANNAH ALLOCCO



[ANTAGONISTIC NATURE]

An antagonistic nature of the aria / Unexpectedly / the catalyst of my addiction

/ how transparent /

*Plucking the feathers / off of her own wings / taking away / her ability to fly / her chance to be
free*

// reading into a projection of her vision //

A broken doll / with everything removed / except her pretty face / and her exquisite figure

/// hollowness is the worst kind of pain ///

*Promising to give her a diamond / if she steals / his reflection / from a mirror
/ she was fooled by his shadow /*

*Epilogue - three facets of the same person -- a prima donna --- spectre of the past - renaître un
poète*





NEW BRUNSWICK

BUBBLE TEA

TOTEM

WRITTEN BY VANESSA TIROK

VIVI BUBBLE TEA

Drink

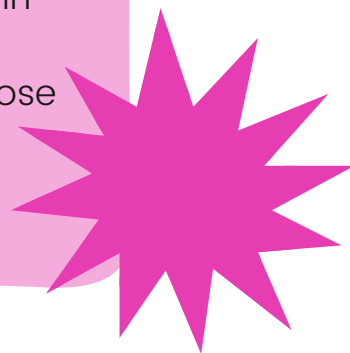
- Flavor: Peach
- Sweet, but not overwhelmingly sweet. Perfectly peachy, a great drink to pair with a savory meal.

Bobas

- The bobas were a bit smaller in size compared to other boba drinks I've had. Chewy, but not the exciting type of chewy. However, the sweet flavor of the bobas makes up for it.

Atmosphere

- Vivi shares the same space as KBG, a Korean barbecue joint, so if you happen to start craving Korean food while sipping on some Vivi, you're in the right place. While the Vivi part of the establishment is rather small, it serves its purpose of providing quality bubble tea.





BUBBLEOLOGY

Drink

- Flavor: Passionfruit
- While I liked that the drink didn't have any pesky passion fruit seeds, I found it to be overall average and underwhelming.

Bobas

- There was a generous amount of bobas in my drink, but that didn't really make up for the fact that they tasted average. Mildly sweet, but not anything exciting.

Atmosphere

- This location is fairly new and is located right in the heart of The Yard. Customers can enjoy their drinks inside with an order of wings from Art of Wings, which I hear is pretty good, or they can hang out in the Yard and enjoy the ambiance of downtown New Brunswick.



SURREAL CREAMERY

Drink

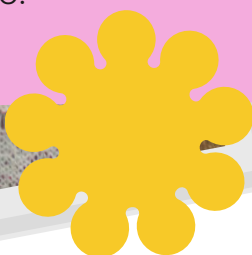
- Flavor: Taro/matcha swirl with taro bubble tea (float)
- Humongous. Gorgeous presentation, swirled to perfection, and the wafer cookie on top was the perfect touch. A great combination of popular milk tea flavors. But I will say this: the first few sips are great, but as you make your way down towards the bottom of the cup, you'll start to feel sick of yourself. A drink from Surreal always feels so good, yet so wrong. If you get overwhelmed by sugar, I would recommend you share this drink with a friend. No man should be made to conquer this monster of a drink alone.

Bobas

- Quite small and flavorless. Imagine chewing on an unused balloon. But the lack of flavor makes sense, any more added sugar to the drink would probably be lethal.

Atmosphere

- With its iconic white brick interior, dangling light bulbs and overall chill ambiance, the pre-COVID version of Surreal Creamery once served its time as the perfect hangout spot. They even had games like Jenga put out for the customers, inviting them to linger a little longer. But in a mid/post-COVID world, many of the chairs have been left stacked upon the tables, making it more of a grab-and-go type of establishment. Surreal creamery is still pretty nonetheless, just not as cozy as it used to be.





GONG CHA

Drink

- Flavor: Winter Melon Oolong Tea
- While it's not the most interesting-looking drink, it definitely has an essence to it that makes it incomparable to any other drinks. Winter melon oolong tastes like long car rides with a loved one, or lying in bed after just washing your sheets. There's no level of refreshment or satisfaction that can match a winter melon oolong from Gongcha.

Bobas

- Divine. Perfectly coated in honey or brown sugar or whatever heavenliness they brew their bobas in. The perfect amount of sliminess and chewiness, and a generous amount of bobas.

Atmosphere

- Small, grab and go

ICONIC

UTEPIA

(GUEST CONTRIBUTION FROM ZACHARY KAUZ)

Drink

- Flavor: Taro Milk Tea (Hot)
- While not particularly hot (I was able to drink it the moment it was in my hand), Utepia's Taro Milk Tea was more than sufficient on a chilly New Brunswick afternoon. The Taro flavor is always emboldened with an earthy, rooty undercurrent, but certain bubble tea establishments go overboard with dampening this flavor with sweetening. This was not an issue at Utepia where the complex flavor of the Taro root asserted itself, no matter how many bobas were present per sip. As a connoisseur of taro, I am happy to say that Utepia's Taro Milk Tea strikes a more elegant balance between taro and sweetness than most taro desserts I have had.

Bobas

- Small but plentiful, a nimble but not tedious chewing experience. The mysterious silky syrup encasing the bobas was less sweet than I am accustomed to, but I appreciated that.

Ambiance

- Reminded me of a very small Apple Store. I sat on a wooden chair and it turned out to be broken. I then went outside.



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